

## **DRY VALLEY RIM WILDERNESS STUDY AREA**

### **1. THE STUDY AREA - 94,308 acres**

The Dry Valley Rim WSA (CA-020-615) is located in Washoe County, Nevada (76,177 acres) and Lassen County, California (18,131 acres). The WSA contains 94,308 acres of public land and surrounds 338 acres of private land located in 8 parcels varying in size from 40 to 160 acres (Table 1). Nearest cities are Susanville, California, 40 miles west and Reno, Nevada, 70 miles south.

The WSA is bounded primarily by dirt roads. Small sections of the boundaries are composed of non-Federal land. The western boundary is the Skedaddle Road. The southern boundary is the Wendel-Sand Pass road. The eastern boundary is the Pipe Springs and Dry Valley roads and a two mile segment of the Smoke Creek Road. The northern boundary is the Smoke Creek Ranch Road and an unnamed dirt road on the northeast side of the WSA that connects to the Smoke Creek road.

The WSA is on the western edge of the arid Great Basin and the southeastern edge of the volcanic Modoc Plateau. The WSA is an area approximately 7 miles wide by 20 miles long. The WSA consists of a north-south trending fault-block that rises gradually from west to east ending in an abrupt eastern face, Dry Valley Rim. The rim is a stair-stepped slope of volcanic rim rock and talus that varies in height from 500' to 1,500' along its 20 mile escarpment. Broad open slopes dip gradually westward from the rim's crest and comprise the majority of the WSA. Numerous small drainages dissect this broad, open slope. On the northern end of the fault-block, uplifting and erosion have created many steep canyons and slopes that form the north and west sides of a high, upland plateau. Elevations in the WSA vary from 3,800' on the WSA's eastern boundary, the edge of the Smoke Creek Desert's dry lake bed, to 6,200' atop the highest part of the rim at the northern end of the WSA. The dominant vegetation in the WSA is big and low sagebrush. Water is very limited in the southern half of the WSA and in the north consists of a few developed springs. The most striking feature of the WSA is Dry Valley Rim and the expansive vistas it affords across the 60-mile expanse of the Smoke Creek Desert's pleistocene lake bed and surrounding steep desert mountain ranges.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Various alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Eagle Lake-Cedarville Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Four (4) different alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: a partial wilderness, which is the recommendation of this report, where 52,395 acres would be designated as wilderness and 41,913 acres released for uses other than wilderness; a second partial wilderness where 36,269 acres would be designated and 58,039 acres released; all wilderness and no wilderness.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE - 52,395 acres recommended for wilderness 41,913 acres recommended for nonwilderness**

The recommendation for this WSA is to designate 52,395 acres as wilderness and to release 41,913 acres uses other than wilderness (Map 1). The all wilderness alternative is the environmentally preferred alternative because it would result in the least change from the existing natural environment over time. The selected alternative will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

This constitutes BLM's report for the entire WSA and is included in the Nevada Statewide package. No report for this WSA is in the California Statewide package. Within California, 7,268 acres are recommended for wilderness and 10,863 acres are recommended for uses other than wilderness. Within Nevada 45,127 acres are recommended for wilderness and 31,050 acres are recommended for uses other than wilderness.

The partial wilderness recommendation is primarily based on the outstanding wilderness characteristics found in the recommended parcel. The areas not recommended for wilderness contain conflicts with other resource uses and management problems. Resource conflicts are with motorized use of these areas for hunting access, potential utility corridor development, and activities of the Sierra Army Depot that affect naturalness within the southern end of the WSA. Management problems are in managing ORV use on numerous existing ways that are in open country which would be very difficult to close.

The recommended wilderness area provides excellent opportunities for experiencing solitude, isolation, and primitive recreation in a natural desert shrub environment that encompasses a large expansive fault-block landform, Dry Valley Rim. A visitor's sense of solitude in the WSA is greatly amplified when atop the 20 mile escarpment of Dry Valley Rim's abrupt eastern face that rises up to 1500' above the Smoke Creek Desert. Here the visitor's feeling of isolation within the WSA is magnified by the vast 60 mile expanse of the desert and the seemingly untouched steep, arid mountains that encircle it. Many small drainages and rims serve to isolate the visitor when exploring the broad, open western slope of the recommended wilderness area.

Opportunities for challenging hiking and exploration are plentiful along the steep eastern and northern faces of the Dry Valley Rim fault-block. Eagle's Head and Black Mountain offer good destinations atop the rim for visitors seeking a challenging climb up the rim's east face. Red Rock, Parker, and Thomas Canyons offer alternate challenging and intriguing routes to the crest of the rim. More gradual slopes lead to the rim's crest from the west and afford less challenging hiking, but equally rewarding views from atop numerous good vantage points along the rim.

Wildlife viewing opportunities are excellent throughout the WSA and enhance primitive recreation experiences within the recommended wilderness area. Consistent updrafts along Dry Valley Rim's lengthy eastern face provide ideal soaring conditions for birds of prey - eagles, falcons and hawks - that inhabit the area. Perched atop the rim, a visitor has the unique opportunity to view these predatory birds face to face as they rise and soar along the edge of the rim. Opportunities for viewing large herds of wintering deer and antelope are also good throughout the broad expanse of the recommended wilderness area's western slope. Viewing resident bands of wild horses and burros provides additional intrigue to a primitive recreation experience within this large open area.

Wilderness designation of the recommended area would close about 12 miles of primitive travel routes.

Management of the area to preserve wilderness qualities will be possible in the area recommended for wilderness because 1) there are no significant resource conflicts with wilderness; 2) the majority of motorized access routes (35 of the 47 miles of access ways in the WSA) that serve 80% of the hunters using the WSA are specifically excluded from the recommended wilderness to insure that hunter access remains available; 3) private inholdings are small, isolated, undeveloped parcels that do not have and are not expected to need developed access; 4) no economically valuable mineral resources occur within the area recommended for wilderness.

Resource conflicts and manageability problems are the basis for the nonwilderness designation recommendation that covers the balance of the WSA. Area's A and B (Map 1) are regularly used each fall for motorized vehicle access by hunters who drive to popular hunting areas. While wilderness values are present in these areas, the values are not considered to be of sufficient quality to outweigh the value that these areas provide for access to popular hunting areas. An estimated 4000 hunter days are spent in the WSA annually. Hunting is the only regular public use of the area. Vehicle access on ways through the areas recommended for uses other than wilderness eliminates lengthy approach walks to the most popular hunting areas located within the area recommended for wilderness. Imposition of a wilderness designation on these areas would conflict with this aspect of an established resource use, hunting. There are approximately 35 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

Impacts on naturalness due to dust clouds from the demolition activities of Sierra Army Depot are the basis for recommending for uses other than wilderness the southern four miles of the WSA shown as Area C on Map 1. This area is subject to dissipating smoke and dust cloud drift from Sierra Army Depot's ammunition demolition facility located 2 miles west and upwind of this part of the WSA. Smoke and dust clouds adversely affect the experience of naturalness within this part of the WSA.

Table 1  
Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>	
	<u>CA</u>	<u>NV</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
BLM (surface and subsurface)	18,131	76,177	94,308
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0	0	0
Inholdings			
State	0	0	0
Private	83	255	338
Total	18,214	76,432	94,646
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>			
BLM (within WSA)	7,268	45,127	52,395
BLM (outside WSA)	0	0	0
Split Estate (within WSA)	0	0	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0	0	0
Total BLM Land Recommended	7,268	45,127	52,395
For Wilderness			
Inholdings <sup>1</sup>			
State	0	0	0
Private	37	162	199
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>			
BLM (surface and subsurface)	10,863	31,050	41,913
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0	0	0
Total BLM Lands Not Recommended	10,863	31,050	41,913
For Wilderness			
Inholdings			
State	0	0	0
Private	46	92	139

<sup>1</sup>Appendix 1 is a detailed description of inholdings and split estate tracts included within the study. For purposes of this report, split estate lands are defined only as those lands with federal surface and non-federal subsurface (minerals). Lands that have federal minerals but non-federal surface should be classified in this report by the owner of the surface estate.

### **3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Wilderness Characteristics**

**A. Naturalness:** The Dry Valley Rim WSA is predominantly natural with minor human imprints that have negligible effect on naturalness in the area as a whole. The area is a north-south trending fault-block that rises gradually from the western side of the WSA to the abrupt 500' to 1500' face of Dry Valley Rim located along the eastern side of the WSA. Sagebrush and grass are the predominant vegetation throughout the WSA.

Small isolated riparian areas are found in the steep, narrow canyons along Dry Valley Rim's eastern face and around springs on the west and northern slopes of the WSA. The rugged lichen-covered escarpment of Dry Valley Rim dominates the eastern 1/3 of the WSA and serves as a dramatic reminder of the natural forces that have shaped the area. Red Rock Canyon on the northern end of the recommended wilderness is of particular note, because of the colorful weathered volcanic rocks that are found within the canyon.

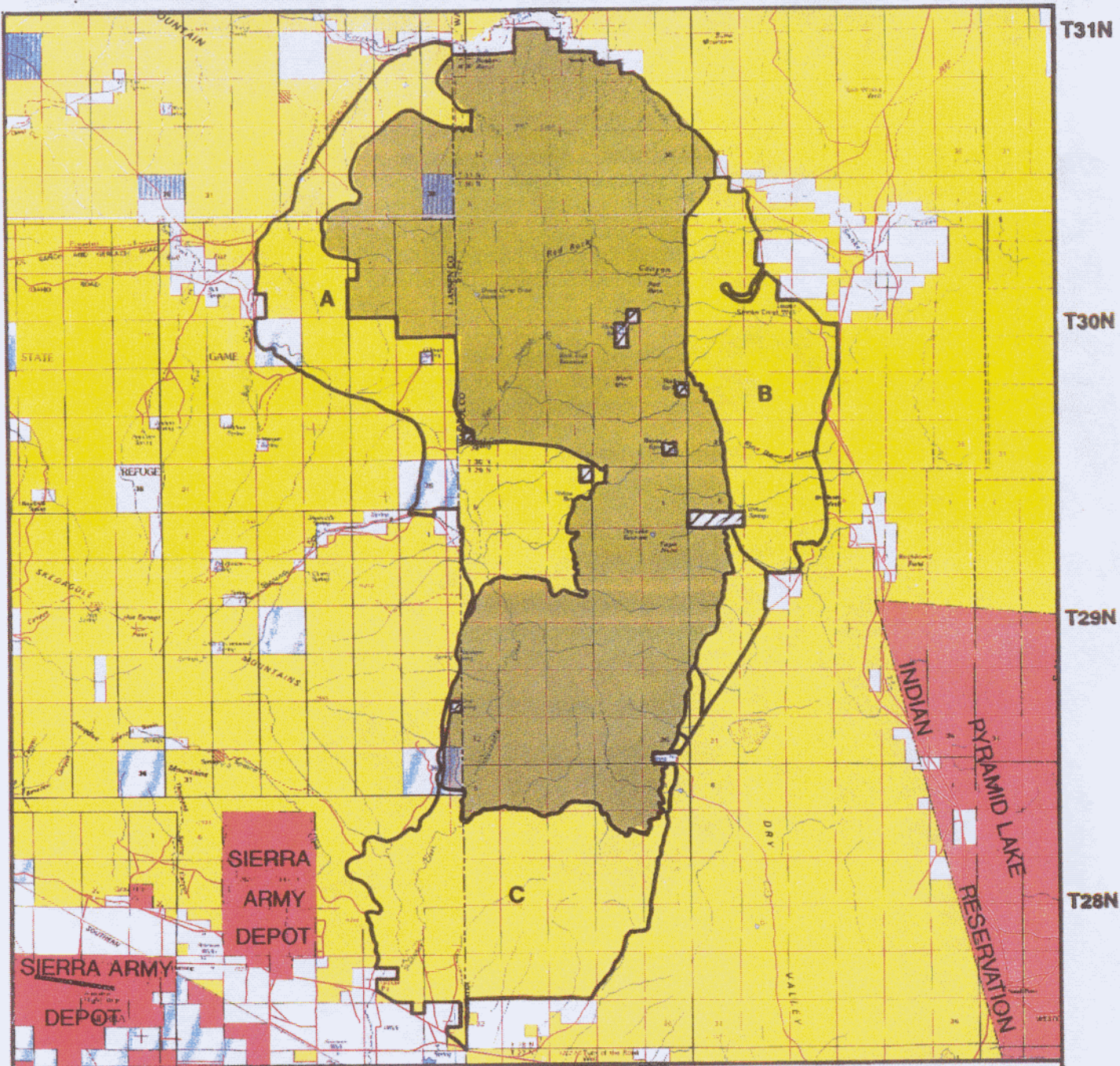
The effect of human imprints on the natural character of the WSA are minimal. Human imprints are small in scale mainly related to livestock grazing. These imprints consist of 16 small stock ponds 1 acre or less in size, 1 developed spring and 12 miles of vehicle access ways leading to the spring and ponds. The ways also are used for hunter access. The ways and water developments are substantially unnoticeable due to their location in drainages where adjacent slopes screen them from view in the surrounding area. Many of the stock pond's small earthen catchment dams have naturally revegetated and blend into the immediate area making observation of the facilities difficult beyond 1/4 mile. The small size, low profile and scattered location of the stock ponds among the 52,594 acres recommended for wilderness have a negligible net impact on naturalness.

Access ways within the WSA receive use only by light vehicles during hunting season and otherwise are hardly used throughout the balance of the year. The ways are little more than wheel tracks through the brush and have little impact on naturalness.

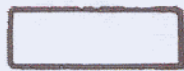
Dispersing dust and smoke clouds drift across the WSA's southern end from Sierra Army Depot's ammunition detonation site, 2 miles west and generally upwind of the WSA. Adverse effects on naturalness within the southern end of the WSA vary depending upon cloud size and dispersal time. Dust and smoke clouds are generated by activities at the depot that generally occur during mid-afternoons. Frequency of activity and associated smoke and dust varies with depot workload, weather conditions and wind direction. The southern 4 miles of the WSA, parcel C (Map 1), was deleted from wilderness designation because of this impact to naturalness.

**B. Solitude:** Opportunities for solitude are good throughout the WSA. The large size, 20 miles north-south, and steep, eastern escarpment of the recommended wilderness area provides a wide variety of areas where isolation and solitude can be found. The western slope of the WSA is not highly varied topographically, but contains numerous small rims and shallow canyons that provide many isolated areas that offer good opportunities for solitude. On the east and north, steep canyons afford excellent areas for isolation and solitude. Atop the varied crest of Dry Valley Rim, broad vistas to the west across the 60 mile expanse of the Smoke Creek Desert amplify a visitor's feeling of solitude and remote isolation within the WSA. The WSA is surrounded by undeveloped areas, both mountain ranges and deserts that add to the experience of solitude within the WSA.





RECOMMENDED FOR  
WILDERNESS -



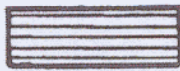
RECOMMENDED FOR  
NONWILDERNESS -



LAND OUTSIDE WSA  
RECOMMENDED FOR  
WILDERNESS - NONE



SPLIT ESTATE - NONE



STATE - NONE



PRIVATE -



MILES

Dry Valley Rim  
Proposal

CA-020-615  
February 1990



During a fall hunting season, chukar hunters access the area via 4-wheel drive vehicles and on foot. Most of this use is concentrated on the eastern side of the WSA. Opportunities for solitude are reduced during this time. Area A, Map 1, is not recommended for wilderness because of the area is heavily used by hunters to access the popular hunting areas along Dry Valley Rim.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude.

**C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:** Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation exist throughout the unit. The unit's rugged, eastern 1/3 and northern upland is of particular interest to persons seeking exploration in rugged canyon areas. Destination-type features and challenging hiking opportunities are centered along Dry Valley Rim and its short, steep canyons. Red Rock Canyon that extends into the northern end of the recommended wilderness area affords good opportunities for sightseeing and exploration. Excellent opportunities for viewing wildlife also occur on the broad, open, western slopes of the WSA where large wintering deer and antelope herds can be readily observed. Bands of resident wild horses and burros are also common in this area. These features combined with the expansive vista's afforded atop Dry Valley Rim greatly add to a primitive recreation experience in the area recommended for wilderness.

**D. Special Features:** This area does not contain any unique geological, biological or historic features that would be notable as special features.

#### **Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System**

**A. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems:** Wilderness designation of the Dry Valley Rim WSA would not add a new ecosystem or landform to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). This WSA is in the sagebrush-steppe desert ecosystem. At the present time, there are four existing wilderness areas; Jarbidge and Santa Rosa in Nevada, South Warner in California and Craters of the Moon in Idaho, within this ecotype.

Table 2  
Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	Areas	Acres	Areas	Acres
	<u>NATIONWIDE</u>			
Intermountain Sagebrush Province/ Sagebrush Steppe	4	131,199	138	4,356,340
	<u>CALIFORNIA</u>			
Sagebrush Steppe	1	31,295	14	697,297
	<u>NEVADA</u>			
Sagebrush Steppe	2	86,907	34	1,252,442

**B. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers:** This WSA is within a five hour drive of 6 major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated wilderness areas and other BLM wilderness study areas within a five hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3  
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS areas		Other BLM Studies	
	Areas	Acres	Areas	Acres
<u>California</u>				
Chico	16	1,256,873	13	430,822
Redding	15	1,264,503	11	344,633
Sacramento	48	5,039,817	87	2,479,541
Yuba City	44	4,951,805	85	2,459,500
<u>Nevada</u>				
Reno	45	4,967,230	175	6,945,487
<u>Oregon</u>				
Medford	31	2,440,081	21	730,038

**C. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas:** The WSA is within a 50 mile radius of 6 BLM WSA's recommended for wilderness designation. The South Warner Wilderness, administered by the Modoc National Forest is the only designated wilderness area within 50 miles of the Dry Valley Rim WSA.

**Manageability** (the area must be capable of being effectively managed to preserve its wilderness character).

The entire WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, considerably more effort would be necessary to maintain the wilderness qualities of solitude in the areas not recommended for wilderness as compared to the area recommended for wilderness designation.

The area recommended for wilderness designation is manageable as wilderness because 1) there are no significant resource conflicts with wilderness; 2) through boundary adjustments made as part of this recommendation all major vehicle access routes have been included in the non wilderness areas; 3) private inholdings, four small, isolated 40 and 80 acre tracts, are not expected to be developed because of their inaccessible locations on the steep escarpment of Dry Valley Rim; 4) no economically valuable mineral resources exist within the area recommended for wilderness.

Boundaries of the recommended wilderness follow contours or legal lines through areas where steep slopes prevent vehicle access. In more open areas, boundaries are set back from regular travel routes on access ways so as to improve manageability by allowing for access to popular areas along and/or at the end of those ways while prohibiting vehicle use beyond those destinations. Where boundaries follow existing roads a 300' setback is included to allow for vehicle pull offs and road maintenance without impairment to wilderness values.

The majority of popular hunting access ways in Dry Valley Rim WSA will remain open as they are outside the area recommended for wilderness and should meet the access needs of most hunters. Approximately 80% of all hunting within the WSA begins along the base of Dry Valley Rim where access ways are located in the areas not recommended for wilderness.

Closure of two access ways at the recommended wilderness area boundaries will be feasible due to terrain features and periodic field patrols during fall hunting season. Through boundary changes the majority of peripheral motorized access ways (35 miles) were deleted from the recommended wilderness area. Closure of the remaining four access ways (12 miles) is necessary to maintain the wilderness qualities of solitude and naturalness in the core of the area recommended for wilderness.

In the areas recommended for nonwilderness, Parcels A and B contain open terrain readily accessible to four-wheel drive vehicles. Numerous ways have been established prior to 1976 to access livestock facilities and popular hunting areas. Hunters have become accustomed to cross country travel through the open terrain adjacent to these ways. Effective closure of these ways and prohibition of vehicle use through these open areas would require regular enforcement of the nonmotorized provisions of wilderness designation from October through December each year during the fall hunting seasons. Due to the open nature of the terrain and the low-growing sagebrush vegetation, any barriers could easily be driven around by a driver determined to enter. A lack of natural barriers or easily recognizable topographic boundary features would make manageability difficult. While wilderness values are present in these areas, the values are not considered to be of sufficient quality to warrant the increased effort needed to manage these areas for nonmotorized use when compared to the value that these areas provide for hunter access. Hunting is the only regular public use of the WSA and is estimated at 4000 visitor days annually which amounts to substantial use of this remote area.

The intensity and degree of ongoing military overflights in this WSA must be considered. Management and coordination of military overflights will be a consideration.

#### **Energy and Mineral Resource Values**

At the time of the recommendation process for the Dry Valley Rim WSA, BLM Unit Resource Analysis (URA) for the Cal-Neva Planning Unit (1980), based on information in the Mineral Resource Inventory (MRI, 1979-1980) described the mineralization of the Planning Unit. No specific reference was made to the WSA, this may have been based on no known occurrences of significant (economic) mineralization.

BLM data in the Affected Environment section of the Eagle Lake-Cedarville EIS (1987), indicated the WSA has unknown potential for oil and gas, and has approximately 17,400 acres classified as prospectively valuable for geothermal. There had been 1200 acres under oil and gas lease, but the leases had been allowed to expire by the lessees. Geothermal resources were being developed 15 miles to the west near Wendel, but no exploration or development has occurred in the WSA. At the time of the EIS there were 5 placer claims and 1 lode claim located within the WSA, although no development or past history of mining was known.

A mineral survey of the suitable portion of the WSA was conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and the U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) during 1985. Their final report was published in USGS Bulletin 1706-D (1988). No metallic mineral resources were identified. Rock and stream-sediment samples were analyzed for 31 elements, but showed no anomalous concentrations or evidence of mineralization.

Two areas were identified as having moderate potential for zeolite. The zeolite forms amygdala fillings in basaltic lava. Mining of zeolite in basalt is highly unlikely due to their low grade and the difficulties and expense associated with extraction (USGS Bulletin 1706-D).

Magnetic surveys indicate the area may be underlain by plutonic rocks at shallow depth. These rocks, if they exist, are pre-Tertiary rocks that cooled millions of years ago. The WSA, therefore, has no geothermal potential (Higgins 1981). The thin sedimentary section is also a poor source for accumulation of oil and gas or reservoir development; subsequently, there is no oil and gas potential (Scott and Miller, 1982; Scott, 1983). Sand and gravel resources are not present in the study area. Current mineral interests in the WSA are



indicated by no oil and gas or geothermal leases, no mineral material sales, and BLM mining claim records dated January 22, 1988 identified the following mining claim information.

Mineral Interest Table

Type of Mining Claim	Number			Acres		
	Suitable	Nonsuitable	Total	Suitable	Nonsuitable	Total
Lode	0	0	0	0	0	0
Placer	0	5	5	0	200	200

There are no claims remaining in the area recommended for wilderness. Those within the areas not recommended for wilderness are believed to have been located for bentonitic clays.

Impacts on Resources

The following comparative impact table summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all the alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire area as wilderness.

Table 4  
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative

Issue Topics	Proposed Action (Partial Wilderness)	All Wilderness Alternative	Partial Wilderness Alternative	No Wilderness/No Action Alternative
Wilderness Values	On the 52,395 acres designated, naturalness and solitude would benefit due to elimination of motorized vehicle use. On the 41,913 acres not designated, naturalness would continue to be impacted on 6,000 acres due to dust and smoke from Sierra Army Depot. The perceptions of naturalness and solitude would be lost on 4,000 acres if development of a 150 acres open pit diatomite mine occurs and on 2,000 acres along the eastern border if a powerline is constructed. Only slight localized reductions in naturalness and solitude would result from development of a 20 acres sand and gravel site and new range improvements.	Designation of the entire area would result in a net benefit to the area's values of naturalness and solitude due to the elimination of 4,000 visitor days of recreational vehicle use. A 6,000 acre area would continue to be impacted due to dust and smoke clouds from the Sierra Army Depot.  Development of new range improvements would result in only slight localized reductions in naturalness and solitude.	Designation of 36,269 acres of wilderness would retain that area in its present undeveloped condition. It contains the most spectacular wildlife and scenery values.  Impacts on the 58,039 acres not designated would be the same as the Proposed Action except there would not be a reduction of 800 visitor days of vehicle use as no ways would be closed.	The core area of Dry Valley Rim (36,269 acres) is rough and rugged and would not change in the foreseeable future. Over most of the rest of the area there will not be any significant change from the existing situation.  Wilderness values of naturalness and solitude will be impaired on a total of 6,000 acres by development of a diatomite mine and construction of a utility powerline.  Development of a 20 acre sand and gravel site and new range improvements would result in only slight reductions in naturalness and solitude.
Trans Sierra Utility Corridor	One lower priority utility corridor under study that passes through 9 miles of the WSA would be eliminated. Either of the other two corridors under study could be used.	Wilderness designation would restrict development of the Trans Sierra Utility Corridor. 1 corridor would be eliminated and the other two blocked by designated wilderness lands.	Impacts are the same as for the Proposed Action.	No impact, as any of the corridors could be utilized.
Mineral Resource Development	No impact. Known deposits of diatomite, sand and gravel would be available for development.	Development of potential mineral resources and a known deposit of sand and gravel would be foregone.	No impact. Known deposits of diatomite, sand and gravel would be available for development.	No impact as known resources could be developed.
Recreational ORV Use	Closure of 12 mi. of ways would eliminate or displace 800 visitor days of ORV use. On the nonwilderness portion, use should remain at current levels for the foreseeable future.	Closure of 47 miles of ways would eliminate or displace 4,000 visitor days of recreational vehicle use.	No impact as none of the 47 miles of ways would be closed.	No impact as none of the 47 miles of ways would be closed and all of the area would be open to vehicle use.

## **Local Social and Economic Considerations**

Sierra Army Depot and Lassen County were both concerned that a wilderness designation of areas near the Sierra Army Depot Demolition Area would eventually put pressure on the Depot to restrict its activities. The recommendation the BLM developed made provisions to eliminate those areas closest to or affected by the demolition area and its dust clouds. Sierra Army Depot is one of the largest employers in Lassen County.

## **Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments**

Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process. Certain comments received during the inventory process and early stages of EIS preparation were used to develop significant study issues and alternative for wilderness management.

A Technical Review Team (TRT) was also used to help identify issues and formulate the alternatives analyzed in the EIS. It was used as a tool to lessen the chances of polarization between interest groups and to provide the Bureau with high quality public input, representative of the positions of key groups interested in or affected by wilderness designation. Input provided by the Technical Review Team was used in developing the wilderness recommendations for this WSA.

For the Eagle Lake-Cedarville Wilderness EIS that included the Twin Peaks WSA, the Susanville District Advisory Council identified the following interests and resources to be represented on an eight-member Technical Review Team: livestock-adjacent land owners; wildlife-agencies-sportsmen; wilderness-environmental-dispersed recreation; minerals-energy-utilities; wild horses; motorized recreation; cultural-historical-archaeological; Bureau of Land Management. The representatives were very knowledgeable and highly respected members of their interest groups. The TRT members toured the WSA, held lengthy discussions spanning many weeks, and eventually reached unanimous agreement that a partial wilderness recommendation was appropriate for the Dry Valley Rim WSA. The team's recommendation of 56% suitable and 44% unsuitable was supported by the Susanville District Advisory Council and by BLM and is the recommended action for this WSA.

Key issues raised through public involvement and analyzed by the Technical Review Team and in the EIS were: a wilderness complex where five adjacent WSA's separated only by boundary roads including Dry Valley Rim WSA would be managed as a wilderness complex inclusive of the road (this was analyzed in the all wilderness alternative of the EIS); the quality of the wilderness resource and how much was appropriate to be preserved and managed as wilderness; concern that wilderness would prevent potential mineral development, livestock management activities; motorized recreation access for hunting; concern that wilderness would limit management of wildlife (installation of water catchments/guzzlers) as well as wild horses and burro populations; and concern that wilderness would preclude development of potential high-voltage electric transmission lines through the region. All of these issues were addressed in each of the four alternatives analyzed in the EIS, all wilderness, partial wilderness (56% suitable, 44% unsuitable) partial wilderness (39% suitable, 61% unsuitable) and no wilderness.

During formal public review of the draft EIS, a total of 342 comments were received that addressed this WSA specifically or as part of general comments on all WSA's in the draft EIS. Of those 342 comments, 12 were oral statements received at the three public hearings held on the draft EIS and 330 were written comments. In general, 37 respondents supported all wilderness, 8 supported no wilderness and 292 supported partial wilderness recommended by BLM. Five respondents supported more wilderness than was addressed in the draft EIS.

Those favoring wilderness cited the WSA's natural character, large size (94,308 acres), opportunities for primitive recreation (mainly hiking and wildlife observation) and opportunities for solitude. Inclusion of the area in the National Wilderness Preservation System as representative of volcanic land forms in the desert

shrub ecosystem was also cited. The WSA's unique fault-block landform and expansive vistas across the Smoke Creek Desert were also mentioned by wilderness advocates.

Those opposed to wilderness cited concern that despite livestock's grandfathered provisions in the Wilderness Act, livestock management activities, particularly motorized access for water facility inspection and maintenance and sheep camp movement, would be restricted. Restrictions or prohibition on development of new water facilities, springs and stock ponds, was also cited as reasons for opposition to wilderness. Others opposed to wilderness cited the elimination of possible mineral development in designated wilderness as a general reason without reference to specific mineral values within the WSA. Lassen Motorcycle Club opposed wilderness designation and pointed out that the club members enjoy trail riding through the area recommended for wilderness. Sierra Army Depot and Lassen County were opposed as they felt that wilderness designation would lead to eventual pressure by environmental groups to restrict the activities of the nearby Sierra Army Depot Demolition Area.

All of the following local and state agencies supported the draft EIS partial wilderness alternative where 56% of the WSA is recommended suitable and 44% is recommended unsuitable:

Nevada County (California) Supervisor Joel Gustafson; The State of Nevada through the Nevada Clearinghouse; The Nevada Division of State Parks; and The California Department of Fish and Game. Washoe County did not submit comments.

Letters were received from two state agencies and five federal agencies that took no positions as to a recommendation on alternatives or acreage to be preserved as wilderness. They were the California Dept. of Water Resources, Nevada Division of Historic Preservation, Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Geological Survey and the Environmental Protection Agency. Lassen County Board of Supervisors and the Department of the Army, Sierra Army Depot supported the non-wilderness alternative. The Nevada Department of Minerals said if the block of claims in T.30N., R.19E., Sections 7 and 8 at the end of a cherrystemmed road were excluded from wilderness (which they are), they had no objection to the remainder of the area being recommended for wilderness.